

The Chautauqua System of Education.

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A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Including a Brief Description of all its Departments
of Popular and Higher Education.



The Chautauqua System
Department of Instruction
Drawer 194, Buffalo, N. Y.

A General View of the System.

The educational agencies of Chautauqua are not disconnected, haphazard efforts in behalf of popular education ; they are harmonious parts of one system designed to render definite service ; they bear natural relations each to the other in a progressive series. It is the aim of those who direct this work to secure the interest, confidence, and active aid of intelligent, earnest people in every community with a view to establishing the system as a whole or in part. The following are the chief features given in the progressive order :

Systematic Individual Reading. In every village, town, and city there are many ambitious people who are anxious to do intellectual work, who are dissatisfied with their mode of mental life. They need wise, definite direction, a carefully outlined course, specified books, an appointment of reading, and suggestions, devices for developing their enthusiasm and encouraging them to persistent effort. The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle meets this demand in an admirable way. This is the first step. The essential features of the plan are :

1. *A definite four years' course* of History, Literature, Science, etc.
2. *Specified volumes* approved by the counselors.
3. *Allotment of time.* Reading apportioned by week and month.

4. *A monthly magazine* with additional readings, notes and general literature.

5. *A membership book*, with suggestions, review outlines, etc.

6. *Time required* forty minutes to an hour a day for nine months.

7. *Certificates* granted to all who complete the four years' course.

8. *Advanced courses*, for continued reading in special lines.

9. *Pedagogical course* for secular teaching.

10. *Young People's Reading Course* to stimulate the reading of good literature by the young.

Local Circles. It follows naturally that individual readers in the same community, pursuing the same course, will be drawn together by a common interest. An organization for mutual aid is inevitable. The social element is introduced. The subjects of reading and study form topics for rational conversation. Contact of mind stimulates thought and awakens dormant powers. The "local circle" exerts a distinct influence upon its members and upon those with whom they associate.

Concerning "circles" the following facts may be mentioned :

1. The "home circle," made up of the members of a household.

2. The "graduate circle"—C. L. S. C. graduates organized for the study of a specialty.

3. The "local circle" proper, often representing many different elements in the community.

4. Meetings held at regular intervals ; weekly meetings are recommended.

5. An organization as formal or as informal as desired.

6. The program prepared either by one officer or by a committee.

7. Meetings held in churches, halls, or in private houses.

8. A limited number of members often desirable.

9. Chautauqua Extension courses a valuable and important feature which may be introduced.

10. A "circle" may extend its influence by aiding in the organization of other circles.

Read Lectures. To supplement the work of the "local circle" or any other study group, popular lectures (usually in courses of six) prepared by well-known specialists, are sent out in type-written form to be read by some competent local person. The materials supplied by the Central Office include :

1. The six lectures.
2. Announcements and placards in any desired quantity.
3. Syllabuses, or small pamphlets with outlines of the lectures. One for each ticket holder.
4. Tickets, as many as may be requested.
5. A final examination paper.

NOTE.—No certificates are granted. The fee required is one half the *gross* receipts. Four courses are now ready.

University Extension. The "local circle" feels the need of a teacher. The most successful circles are those which are directed and virtually taught by a high school teacher, a minister, a bright lawyer, or a doctor. Circles may secure college professors and other competent instructors to give lectures—on what is known as the University Extension plan—on the subject of the year's reading. Chautauqua is in a position to arrange for such courses which supplement the work of the "local circle" and offer valuable opportunities to the community in general. The essential features of the plan are :

1. A course of progressive weekly lectures on one subject by the same lecturer.

2. A printed syllabus or outline of each lecture distributed through the audience.

3. A "quiz," or class exercise, at the close of each lecture.

4. Questions set at one exercise to be answered in writing before the next and submitted to the lecturer for correction and comment.

5. A reference library (a collection of books at a public library or other accessible place) of volumes bearing on the course.

6. A written examination at the end of the course.

Further details, together with a list of lecturers available for the coming winter may be obtained on application to the Executive Secretary of the Chautauqua College, Drawer 194, Buffalo, N. Y.

College Correspondence Teaching. There are always those who have the ambition and perseverance to do serious mental work. Chautauqua can put these in regular communication with college professors who, by means of lesson sheets and a carefully worked out plan, give thorough instruction in college subjects. A small group of correspondence students may obtain great benefit from working together.

Propaganda.

It is proposed to extend this system by establishing in every city, town, and village one of the following agencies :

A Local Board representing the leading religious denominations, the Y. M. C. A., the Press, the Public Schools or Academies, the Chautauqua Circle, the Public Library, or other institutions standing for the highest and best interests of the community.

The work of this board should be simply to keep informed concerning the various courses offered by

the Chautauqua System of Education, and to arrange at suitable times to present the work to the community.

The value of such a board lies in the fact that it identifies Chautauqua work with the community as a whole and not merely with some one denomination or section. There are many persons who are not reached by the Chautauqua System, merely because they do not appreciate the real nature of the opportunities which it offers, and a Local Board as above described can render great service to the community by an occasional public presentation of the various courses which Chautauqua provides.

A local committee of three members will do the same work in smaller places.

A local representative will look after the interests of Chautauqua in villages and country districts.

How to Present the System.

1. Send to John H. Vincent, Drawer 194, Buffalo, N. Y., for a half-dozen or more "sets" of circulars for the use of the "Local Board." These will explain the chief features of the system.

2. Arrange for a preliminary meeting for the organization of a "Board," inviting persons who represent the various religious and educational institutions prominent in the community, and others whose influence and activity may be relied upon.

3. At this meeting discuss the plans presented by the Chautauqua System and the possibilities of utilizing them in your community. Study up the situation carefully. There are more people who can be reached and helped by Chautauqua than is sometimes at first realized.

4. If feasible, organize the Local Board or Committee at this meeting, and arrange for a public meeting when the general scope of Chautauqua work may be presented. District the community and let one or two active persons in each district circulate notices of the meeting, and arouse interest in the plan.

5. At the public meeting have the various phases of the work presented by one or more speakers, and then hold an informal after-meeting for answering inquiries, distributing circulars, etc.

6. All needed circulars will be furnished by the Chautauqua Office. The C. L. S. C. circulars will doubtless be those most in demand, as this department has already enrolled more than two hundred thousand persons.

The above suggestions offer a definite but very simple plan of work. By concerted action on the part of a few an entire community may be aroused to the value of united, systematic effort in the work of education.

The Chautauqua Office will be glad to enter into correspondence with persons interested. Address

JOHN H. VINCENT,

Drawer 194, Buffalo, New York.

